CRIMINAL MACABRE

A Cal McDonald Mystery

Chapter One

Steve Niles 2002

PAGE ONE

NOTE: Pages 1-4 adapted to pre-existing pages. I have scripted tight in some places and looser in others so Ben can do his thing. I tried to make change any references to DC into LA, but if you see something that strikes you as odd, let me know.

Now, let's have some fun.

Panel 1: No text.

Panel 2: Image focusing.

VOICE BALLOON/CAPTION
Cut the crap, McDonald. We have bodies...

Panel 3: man in suit.

VOICE BALLOON/CAPTION2
...property damage...

Panel 4: Man in suit.

MAN IN SUIT
We know you were there.

Panel 5: We have bald cop (right) and beaker-head(left) and Man in suit (middle).

Panel 6: bald.

BALD COP
We can do this the easy way...

Panel 7: Beaker.

BEAKER-HEAD
...Or the hard way.

CAPTION
Let me tell you something about cops.

PAGE TWO

SPLASH: Cal beaten up at the table.

CAPTION
They like to play it tough, but half of them are on the verge of complete emotional breakdowns.

CAL
I’ve been talking. Problem is you boys aren’t listening. If you promise to focus, I’ll run through it again.

CAPTION 2
That’s what happens when all you see is the worst of the worst, when your entire life revolves around the world’s butt-hole.

CAPTION 3
I should know. I used to be a cop until they found me passed-out in my squad car and ran a couple drug tests.

CAPTION 4
Needless to say, I failed.

PAGE THREE

Panel 1: Cops stare. (Can Cal be added to this panel?)

CAPTION
But I find they get really testy when all you talk about are MONSTERS.

MIDDLE COP
Okay...one more time and try to insert a little reality into this one.

Panel 2: Cal.

CAL
Got a butt?

Panel 3: Takes cig.

CAL
Thanks.

CAL
Now, just remember one thing...

Panel 4: lights cig

CAL 2
...*you asked*.

Panels 5 through 8: Spread Caption over the panels. I have a special request that the Captions start as Balloons and TRANSFORM into rectangle captions.

CAL
Like I said before...

CAL/CAPTION
It all started as a quick open and shut case of **vampirism**,

CAPTION
Nothing more, nothing less...

PAGE FOUR

SPLASH: Cal at desk.

CAPTION
I was tracking a blood-sucker punk-ass who was doing a little after hours work on some UCLA co-eds.

CAPTION 2
I think LAPD reported the attacks as *unusual homicides*. I'd call a victim completely drained of blood a little more than unusual, but that's just me.

VOICE BALLOON/CAPTION COP
Get on with it, McDonald or so help me...

VOICE BALLOON/CAPTION 4
I wasn't having much luck until I received a tip from a ghoul I know.

VOICE BALLOON/CAPTION COP
A girl?

VOICE BALLOON/CAPTION CAL
A *GHOUL*. Come on, try to keep up.

CAL
You sure it's him? Okay, thanks, Creepy. I owe you one.

CAL 2
No, MO'LOCK'S not here....I have no idea. I'm not his fuckin' secretary.

PAGE FIVE

Panel 1: Cal makes his way (or is already there) to the other side of the room to the large trunk with the drawers. He pulls open the top drawer.

CAPTION
The *tip* was that a certain weasel of a vampire had been skulking around a night-club in Hollywood.

CAPTION
Usually, like a lot of bloodsuckers he was sickly-looking, like a junkie, due to lack of feeding, but lately he'd been looking pretty well fed, so I decided to check it out.

Panel 2: Inside is a large collection of strange and unusual weaponry.

CAPTION
First things first; Silver bullets, crosses, stakes through the heart – that's all a bunch of horse-shit.

Panel 3: Cal finally pulls out what he was looking for: a sawed-off shotgun, two barrels with a pistol grip.

CAPTION
Fact is there ain't nothing that walks the earth that can't be taken down with a slug or a solid blow to the head.

Panel 4: Cal.

CAPTION
I don't care about the lore. Maybe it was different a long time ago, but modern times call for modern methods.

Panel 5: Cal cocks the gun, and as he checks the .45.

VOICE BALLOON/CAPTION COP
State your name an occupation.

CAPTION
Again?

CAPTION
The name's Cal McDonald. I'm a private detective. I take cases you cops won't touch.

CAPTION
I'm a monster hunter.

CAPTION
Shut the fuck up.

PAGE SIX

Panel 1: Cal hits the streets of LA. It's overcast. It's always overcast in Cal's world.

CAPTION
I used to live in DC, but I got sick of the same old crap, and left.

CAPTION
I came to LA following a severed head and I've been here ever since.

Panel 2: Cal moves among the bustling commuter crowds, ordinary men and women making their way home at day's end, trying hard to keep their eyes straight ahead, away from all contact with others. Among the normal we see strange faces too...the faces of the dead living among the living.

CAPTION
It's alright here.

CAPTION
I'm not a big fan of the sun, but the people keep to themselves in Los Angeles.

Panel 3, 4, 5: Ahead of Cal, a thin GANGLY MAN shuffles along, his face hidden beneath a baseball cap. Cal watches him curiously, knowingly, the strange, pale features beneath the cap.

CAPTION (p3)
Like most major cities, ghouls are pretty much everywhere in LA. They're just a little more active here.

CAPTION (p4)
On the east, they were hard blue-collar workers, but here some are cops and movie producers.

GHOUL (creepy balloon)
How's it going, McDonald?

Panel 6: Cal stops at his car as the Man/Ghoul passes. They have an exchange without looking at each.

CAL
Taking it as it comes. How are things with you?

CAPTION
The rest are straight up, slack-ass *lurkers.*

Panel 7: Cal starts to unlock his 63 Pontiac Catalina...black of course.

CAPTION
Those are the ghouls I’m used to.

GHOUL (creepy)
Pretty dead.

Panel 8: Cal smiles.

PAGE SEVEN

Panel 1: We see Cal’s has come to a stop outside a club called the Black Cat Club. The logo is a neon woman dressed as a black cat stripping.

CAPTION
My blood sucker had been spotted slumming at a sleazy watering hole called the Black Cat Club.

Panel 2: Cal inside the dark club full of drunks and freaks. It’s a seedy, creepy scene.

CAPTION
The Cat was a dive know to attract low-lifes and no-lifes...

Panel 3: As soon as he enters, several strange looking PATRONS notice him and scatter for the exit.

CAPTION
...and the usual lot unnatural freaks.

Panel 4: He scans the place.

CAPTION
But I wasn’t looking for freaks.

CAPTION
Not this time.

Panel 5: Several barfly types are hanging on the small half circle bar, and a big nasty looking BARTENDER has his eyes fixed on Cal.

CAPTION
I was looking for a vampire.

Panel 6: Cal settles his gaze on a desperate looking STREET THUG with white skin and black hair. The thug turns his head just enough to spot Cal, then quickly looks away.

CAPTION
And bingo, there he was looking pretty well-fed, pretending to have a beer.

CAPTION 2
Problem was, monster infested or not, the dive was a public bar.

CAPTION 3
As much as I wanted to I couldn’t just stroll over and blow his brains all over the racks of watered down hooch.

PAGE EIGHT

Panel 1: The thug immediately jumps from his stool, knocking into a few people, causing a mild disturbance.

CAPTION
Lucky for me, sucky spotted me and panicked.

Panel 2: Scrambling for the exit, passed Cal, he suddenly makes a run to the door. Cal just smiles as he passes.

CAPTION
I let him, but I stayed close and made contact.

Panel 3: The vampire leaps out through a window. Cal stands there watching.

CAPTION
KRIIISH!

Panel 4: Cal only smirks, and reveals the wallet he has pilfered from the vampire.

CAPTION
Oldest trick in the book. Lift the wallet, track him to his lair and pound a table leg through his chest nice and private like.

CAL
Thanks.

CAPTION
Vampires are like everybody else in Los Angeles. If you want to get around, you gotta drive. You wanna drive without LAPD hauling you off to a cell, you gotta have a licence.

Panel 5: He inspects its contents.

CAPTION
You’d think they’d at least use a fake address or something, but no, vampires are as retarded as most humans.

Panel 6: There's some cash, an ID that and an odd scrap of paper with the following scrawled on it: 1313 Matheson Lane.

CAPTION
And this genius not only had an address on his license, he had another one written on a piece of paper.

CAPTION
It was a little closer drive than the one on the ID, so I decided to check it out first.

CAPTION
That was the first in a long series of bad moves.

PAGE NINE

Panel 1: Cal spots the bartender moving closer to him.

CAL
Watch it, Lumpy. I've got no problem with you.

Panel 2: A close-up on the bartender reveals entirely white eyes with tiny pins of red for pupils.

Panel 3: The Catalina pulls up in front of a RUN-DOWN TWO STORY HOUSE hidden by overgrown bushes.

CAPTION
I drove right over to the address.

CAPTION
But the place felt strange. I just figured I was in for a fight with the vamp.

Panel 4: Cal stands outside the house. The house is pretty creepy, kinda gothic deal.

CAPTION
I didn’t mind. I like it when they fight back.

CAPTION
But this was different. It wasn’t the usual feeling. It felt like, I don’t know, like somebody had a Voodoo Doll of me and they’d stuck a ten penny nail right through the back of its head.

Panel 5: As Cal approaches quietly, he hears muffled voices coming from inside the house. For the comic I think we should show a lit window and we see WEIRD HUMANOID SHAPES inside as Cal spies outside.

CAPTION
I should have gone home and smoked a big, fat joint and chased it with some pills and a bottle of Jim Beam.

CAPTION
But I didn’t. Bad move number two.

CAPTION
Inside the house I could hear all this chit-chat. One voice, a high, whiney voice did most of the talking.

PAGES TEN & ELEVEN

SPREAD with insets along bottom right: Cal is pressed against the outside of the window with his sawed-off,

pistol grip shotgun. To his right we have a clear look inside the house through the window. We see the room is full of monsters: The vampire he was tracking, some sort of FREAK-BEAST with a strange combination of bat and human features, a bow-legged FIEND with pencil-thin limbs, and a WEREWOLF sitting on the floor. It’s freakshow. Insets 1, 2, 3: Another WEREWOLF with full black fur walks into the room holding a beer can. As the werewolf walks to a chair near the window, it is TRANSFORMING all the way. By the time it sits down, it is fully transformed into a human. He pops open the beer. 3 panels = transformation.

CAPTION
He was inside, the vampire I was tracking, and he had some friends.

CAL
(whispering)
I don’t believe it...

CAPTION
I've seen a lot of crazy shit in my life, but this was the first time I'd seen vampires and werewolves together, let alone the other monsters with them.

CAPTION
Monsters don’t mix.

CAPTION
They're an exclusive lot with their own itineraries, namely killing people.

CAPTION
That strange feeling quickly gave way to a super-charge rush of adrenaline.

CAPTION
I probably shoulda been more frightened, but all I could think was what a huge haul I had in front of me.

CAPTION
We’ll call that bad move number three.

PAGE TWELVE

Panel 1: Cal huddles underneath the window and peers in. As he peers in, he sees the source of the voice. Shockingly, it is a HUMAN. The man has a rather large bald head, but other than that he appears to be normal.

CAPTION
But then I realized there was an even odder addition to the gathering.

HUMAN (with test tube)
If you're all settled, I shall reveal the reason I've asked you all here tonight.

CAL
(whispering to himself)
...a human?! *With monsters?*

CAPTION
I didn't know what he had and I didn't care. Vampires and werewolves mixing was bad enough. It was all I needed to see.

Panel 2: Now we are inside the meeting and we see Cal peering from outside. He looks comical with only his nose and eyes showing.

WEREWOLF
It's ridiculous. What proof do you have?!

HUMAN
People, please. You've got to listen.

NOSFERATU
Let's hear the man out.

FIEND (far right)
If he's right, nothing could stop us-

Panel 3: Everybody freezes at the sound of a gun cocking. They all turn. At the back entrance to the room...

SOUNDFX
CLICK-CLICK-CHUNKK!

WEREWOLF
Huh?

Panel 4: ...stands Cal with the shotgun and a back-up .45 automatic.

CAL
Don't stop on my account. I'm dying to hear what this little Tupperware party's all about.

Panel 5: There is a tense moment where all of the monsters are frozen; unsure who will make the first move.

CAPTION
Check...bad move number four.

PAGE THIRTEEN

Panel 1: All at once, they scatter. There's total chaos. Cal holds his ground. The black-furred werewolf leaps out the window in human form. The other werewolf lunges at Cal, but Cal downs him with one blast from the shotgun.

SOUNDFX (huge)
KABLAMM!

WEREWOLF
Arrrrrrrroooo!

THING (going out window- small)
I'm outta here!

Panel 2: The vampire and fiend come after Cal. Cal drops the shotgun.

CAL
Well...come and get it.

Panel 3: With one motion Cal grabs his .45 and cuts down the vampire. Seeing his two fallen comrades, the fiend has a change of heart, and turns to run out the door.

SOUNDFX
BLAMM!

SOUNDFX
Splat!

NOSFERATU
Hissssss!

Panel 4: Only Cal and the big-headed human remain. They are facing each other. The human stands there, holding only the glass vial. He is wearing a T-shirt that reads: THE FUTURE IS STUPID.

CAL
Your buddies took off. The rest are dead. Tell me what the hell's going on here you'll be joining them.

Panel 5: A revolver lies on the table half covered by a magazine. The magazine is SPECULATOR MAGAZINE. One of the stories on the cover is about Cal. Headline reads: LA DICK DECAPITATES DASTARDLY DEMON! The human eyes the revolver.

CAL (from panel 4)
Don't do it. Don't even think about it.

Panel 6: Close on cover and gun.

PAGE FOURTEEN

Panel 1: Tight close up as the human holds up tight to the glass vial.

HUMAN
A little ahead of *schedule*, I suppose, but there's no time like the present, eh?

Panel 2: Grinning at Cal, the odd Human continues reaching for the gun.

CAL
Are you out of you mind?! Freeze right where you are.

CAPTION
I couldn’t believe it. I had him in my sites and my finger on the trigger, but he kept moving for the gun.

Panel 3: Cal has no choice. He fires three quick blasts from the .45.

CAPTION
For once it was time for *someone else* to make the wrong move.

SOUNDFX
BLAMM! BLAMM! BLAMM!

Panel 4: The shots hit the human in quick succession across the chest.

CAPTION
At least that’s the way it appeared.

Panel 5: The vial falls and shatters on the floor with the human dead next to the shattered glass and tiny contents.

CAPTION
But if there’s one cliché that always seemed to creep into my life...

CAPTION
...it was *nothing* was *ever* what it appeared to be at first glance.

PAGE FIFTEEN

Panel 1: Hand and shattered test tube.

Panel 2: Using his last breaths of life to reach and grab at the glass debris.

Panel 3: the human finally cups something. He closes his fist. Then, almost with a smile, he flinches, convulses, and dies.

Panel 4: Cal stands over the dead man.

CAL
Crazy bastard. I told ya to stop.

Panel 5: Cal steps over to the body as its fist opens...

CAPTION
Sometimes, I couldn’t believe my life.

CAPTION
But, the way I’ve always explained it, people are *attractors*...

Panel 6: In the man's palm, a red welt begins to grow from a tiny black dot at the center of it.

CAPTION
Some seem to have undeniable good luck, while others live an endless stream of disasters.

PAGE SIXTEEN

Panel 1: The welt spreads, vein-like and red, seemingly with a life of its own.

CAPTION
Some attract love, money, good fortune, bad fortune.

CAPTION
And some people attract the *bizarre*.

CAPTION
I’ve always fit into the last group.

Panel 2: Cal looks at an assortment of pictures of an insect next to the gun on the table and then around at the three bodies. Everything is quiet except for the sound of Cal's sigh.

CAPTION
But nothing could prepare me for the mess I was about to experience.

CAL
What the hell?

CAPTION
Soon I’d wish I never heard the word monster.

Panel 3: The sign on the building reads THE ROCKWELL INSTITUTE OF INFECTIOUS AND DEADLY DISEASES. It’s graveyard quiet inside the institute, not a single sound can be heard vibrating off the sterile walls or clean tile floor.

CAPTION
Somewhere else.

CAPTION
A few weeks later.

Panel 4: Outside small booth/room.

Panel 5: Inside a small booth near the main entrance the NIGHT WATCHMAN reads a dog-eared paperback of RED HARVEST, and fails to notice the shadowy figures that are crossing the security cameras.

Panel 6: Along the hall three shadows move across the clean tile floor.

SOUND FX
...Click, Clack, Click, Clack...

PAGE SEVENTEEN

Panel 1: A talon-tipped, red-furred finger presses a series of key-pad buttons, and with a popping hiss, a sequence of three air-locked doors opens one after the other allowing access for the intruders to the sterile laboratory beyond.

SOUNDFX
beep. beep. beep.

Panel 2: LABORATORY. We do not get a clear view of the intruders as they move through the lab, but we get enough of a glimpse to make out three furred creatures, one red, one black, and the other light brown.

Panel 3: A light brown furry hand reaches out and pulls open a cabinet. Inside there are a series of small air-locked cubes that look like PO boxes.

Panel 4: One of the creatures, Red, suddenly turns and looks upward toward the corner of the room and spots a camera pivoting side to side, and grunts.

Panel 5: Black’s hand triggers a release button next to one of the cubes. It opens with a steamy cold hiss.

Panel 6: Inside the box is a canister marked **BUB1349.**

PAGE EIGHTEEN

Panel 1: Watchman’s room

Panel 2: Red slips out through the three security doors and along the hall until it is outside the night watchman’s booth.

Panel 3: Suddenly the night watchman glances over the rim of his paperback.

WATCHMAN
That you, Dr. Haggerty?

Panel 4: A RED WEREWOLF blocks the door. He is big and fierce and bearing his razor teeth at the night watchman. With one unseen swipe of his claws the guard is disarmed.

WEREWOLF
RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR

Panel 5: The night watchman shudders and shakes with fear. He tries to back further away, but he is out of room. All he can do is watch the werewolf’s claws bear down on him, and feel as his bladder empties down his pant leg.

GUARD
AAAAHHHHHHHHHH!

Panel 6: The werewolf reaches.

PAGE NINETEEN

Panel 1: The night watchman cringes as...

Panel 2: the werewolf's clawed finger moves right past the watchman and hits the eject button on the monitoring system.

SOUNDFX (small)
click.

Panel 3: The tape pops out.

Panel 4: The werewolf takes the tape.

Panel 5: The night watchman passes out.

Panel 6: The three werewolves disappear into the night.

PAGE TWENTY

Panel 1: DAY. The institute is surrounded by Washington Metropolitan police cruisers. The place has been taped off and no one is being allowed to enter. Cal's Catalina is parked half on the sidewalk.

Panel 2: The scene inside is typical police chaos as twenty people step over each other trying to get their aspect of the investigation completed. A PHOTOGRAPHER buzzes around snapping pictures, INVESTIGATORS dust for prints and plainclothes DETECTIVES question the night watchman who sits wrapped in a blanket sipping coffee from a cup.

Panel 3: The scene is being supervised by DETECTIVE LIEUTENANT GRETCHEN BRUEGER, a serious-minded woman who has little patience for sloppy police work and even less for crazy stories, which is all she's hearing from the night watchman's account. She listens from a distance and rolls her tongue around inside her cheek.

NIGHT WATCHMAN
-and its hair covered everywhere. Its teeth were, like
(gritting his teeth)
Graaaa!

Panel 4: Brueger turns away disgusted as a LAB WORKER wearing a lab coat with a R.I.I.D.D. emblem approaches her and hands her a small slip of paper.

LAB WORKER
Here’s the list you asked for, Miss.

BRUEGER
That’s Detective Lieutenant. This is all that was taken?

LAB WORKER
Yes, near as I can tell everything else is where I left it.

BRUEGER
What’s BUB1349?

Panel 5: Close on Gretchen.

LAB WORKER
It’s a rare strain of Bubonic Plague that-

BRUEGER
Plague!?

Panel 6: Several people stop what they’re doing and turn. The lab worker smiles and gestures with his hand.

LAB WORKER
It’s a rare strain that has never been attributed to any recorded deaths when it initially broke out in-

VOICE(from off panel)
-A small European village between 1337 and 1350 when the Black Death maxed-out.

PAGE TWENTY-ONE

Panel 1: Brueger and the lab worker turn to see who’s speaking.

Panel 2: It’s Cal looking tired and a little smug. He has a large bandage on his forehead.

CAL
Like he said, no deaths were ever attributed to this particular strain of

plague bacteria, but some say an entire town's population disappeared without a trace.

LAB WORKER
That's a legend, anyway.

CAL
Sometimes the legends teach us more than text books, Poindexter.

Panel 3: Brueger and Cal turn toward each other blocking out the lab worker who takes the hint and leaves.

CAL
You rang?

BRUEGER
Yeah...What happened to your head?

CAL
I had a little disagreement with some people at a bar last night.

BRUEGER
Some people?

CAL
Pretty much everybody. Forget it. What's up?

Panel 4: Brueger starts to walk toward the lab area. Cal follows.

BRUEGER
I don't really know, but when I heard the watchman babbling like a crazy man, I thought of you right away.

CAL
What's the run-down?

BRUEGER
Around four a.m. last night between two and four perps wearing some sort of *animal costumes* broke into the lab, stole a canister with samples of that

Bub-whatever-the-crap. They attacked the night watchman, swiped the security tape and then disappeared. Nothing was broken. The perps used security codes to access the lab, and basically that's all we have. That and what the guard says.

Panel 5: Cal and Brueger in lab.

CAL
And what's that?

BRUEGER
He *says* they weren't wearing costumes. That he was attacked by some kind of... creature, covered with fur like a dog and-

CAL
Werewolf. Seems obvious but it doesn't fit.

BRUEGER
Here we go!

Panel 6: Cal follows Brueger out of the lab.

CAL
There's no way werewolves did this. For starters, the guard would be dead. Two, werewolves don't steal, they hunt. Nothing organized like this.

Panel 7: Cal lights a cigarette and walks out. BRUEGER watches. A couple cops glare at Cal.

BRUEGER
Why do I listen to you? Do you know what you sound like?

CAL
All I *know* is you keep calling me. Thanks for the tour.

Panel 8: Cal exits the scene passing the night watchman as he goes, and giving him a quick once over. He is white as a sheet, shivering, and Cal is not so sure the man hasn't seen something.

CAL
Have your lab boys run some of the hair on the floor they seem to have missed.

CAL
And while there at it they might want to look at the scratch marks on those drawers. If the perps were wearing costumes, they had some pretty sharp claws.

PAGE TWENTY-TWO

Panel 1: Cal stands outside his small Spanish-style house in Studio City. He has a bag full of bottles.

CAPTION
Studio City.

Panel 2: And sees that his door is ajar. Somebody's broken in.

CAL
Son-of-a-bitch.

Panel 3: Gun in hand, Cal sneaks towards the open door.

Panel 4: Inside, it is dark and quiet. Cal peers around the corner, squinting and straining to see who or what is in his office.

Panel 5: Through the open door we see the outline of a large MAN sitting in the dark at his desk. The shades are drawn. No lights are on.

Panel 6: Cal readies himself with a silent count and raises the .45.

PAGE TWENTY-THREE

Panel 1: Bam! Cal leaps into the office shooting at the tall ominous figure!

SOUNDFX
BLAMM! BLAMM! BLAMM!

Panel 2: Cal looks down. His expression changes quickly from shock...

Panel 3: ... and then suddenly, he rolls his eyes.

Panel 4: Lying on the floor, on his back, is MO'LOCK. Mo'Lock is Cal's occasional partner, and only friend. He wears a black suit, white shirt and tie. He has three bullet holes smoldering through his shirt.

MO'LOCK
Is this a bad time, Cal?

CAL
Mo'Lock! Goddamn ghoul.

Panel 5: Cal storms to his desk and puts down the bag and smoking gun as the gangly Mo'Lock climbs to his feet.

CAL
Why do you do that shit?

MO'LOCK
Sorry. I needed to ask you something...
And for future reference, bullets may
not kill me but they hurt quite a bit.

CAL
Quit whining. You'll heal.

Panel 6: Mo'Lock pokes at the holes in his shirt as Cal chugs from a bottle.

SOUNDFX
Glug, glug, glug.

MO'LOCK
Not the shirt.

CAL
I'll try to keep that in mind, just stop-

PAGE TWENTY-FOUR

Panel 1: Cal shakes his head and waves his hands as if swatting at gnats. Cal is throwing back a handful of pills.

CAL
Forget it. What’s so important that you had to break into my place?

Panel 2: ...and chases the pills with a swig from the bottle.

MO’LOCK
There is trouble among my brethren.

CAL
What else is new?

MO’LOCK
What are those?

CAL
Aspirin, codeine, ephedrine and something I found on the sidewalk. Keep talking.

Panel 3: Mo’Lock walks around the desk picking at the holes in his dress shirt.

MO’LOCK
I have been asked by the cities ghouls to ask for your assistance. There has been an attack. Would you mind accompanying me to the underground?

CAL
The sewers? Why does it always have to be in the sewers?! I’m sick and fucking tired of traipsing around in shit and slime.

MO’LOCK
Please, Cal. Inexplicable things are happening. We need your help. *I* need your help.

Panel 4: Cal sucks on the bottle

CAL
I'm staying right here. I'm working on a buzz. I deserve a decent buzz. I'm not going to the fucking sewers. *Period.*

PAGE TWENTY-FIVE

Panel 1: Cal plods several feet behind Mo'Lock through the dark wet tunnel of the sewers.

CAL
...and the night watchman says it was werewolves who robbed the place, but-

MO'LOCK
I have never heard of lycanthropes stealing before, let alone acting as a group. It goes against their solitary hunter nature. It has been hundreds of years since they ran in packs.

Panel 2: Cal and Mo'Lock are now walking side by side. Cal's eyes are red and half-shut. He's trying to get a cigarette out of his pocket.

CAL
This is what I'm saying! It makes no sense! But I did see scratches and hair that could match a werewolf.

MO'LOCK
Perhaps it was thieves wearing costumes?

Panel 3: Cal lights his cigarette. The flame almost burns his face. Mo'Lock doesn't notice.

CAL
Yeah, thugs in dog suits. That's Brueger's theory. Why would anybody do something so stupid?

Panel 4: Peering from the darkness we see a LITTLE GREY MONSTER. He's naked, about 3 feet tall with hair sprouting from his pits, crotch and ears. He has a big wide mouth

with rows of teeth and small white eyes on his oval face. He's some sort of gremlin.

Panel 5: Mo'Lock has stopped at a steel ladder bolted into the cement tunnel.

MO'LOCK
I put nothing past humans.

MO'LOCK
This way.

CAL
Me first. I wanna watch your ass wiggle as you go down.

PAGE TWENTY-SIX

Panel 1: Cal waits as Mo'Lock climbs down.

CAL
Yeah, that's the stuff. Shake it dead-boy.

MO'LOCK
You are inebriated...Perhaps it is another form of shape-shifter or a new species that we have yet to encounter?

Panel 2: And now they are down in another chamber. It's just as dark and just as creepy and drippy with slop and slime. Cal is looking around. Mo'Lock is heading away from us down the tunnel.

CAL
Nice place. I love the way the *shit* accents the gunk?

MO'LOCK
This way.

Panel 3: Mo'Lock stops at a steel door and taps lightly. Cal watches fascinated.

Panel 4: Biggest panel on page. As big as you can. Cal is facing the open door and we are looking at the open doorway. IN the doorway is one of the biggest, ugliest ghouls we have ever seen and behind him we can see a least a dozen other.

UGLY GHOUL
It’s about time. Everybody has arrived.

CAL
Yikes.

To be continued.